English 480—01
Fall 2026
HUM 114

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ENG 480 GWAR: Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement
[JUNIOR SEMINAR]

As the portal course for the English major (and its GWAR class), this course is designed to give you more in-depth experience writing in the discipline of English. The fundamental work we do—close reading, analyzing what we read, and writing about it—is too often taken for granted both within the academy and outside, in the "real" world. As juniors and seniors, your professors will expect, even assume, that you know how to read a text and compose a coherent written argument, and in the working world, your future employers will expect the same. But what counts as “good” reading, writing, and research practices in English? This is the broad question that will drive our work in this course for the next fifteen weeks as we carefully read a number of literary texts from different genres and historical periods, confront a number of academic essays on one of these texts, and peruse a few theoretical paradigms to boot.

TEXTS AND MATERIALS*
James Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues”
William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*
Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis*
[Select poems]
*All course texts will be available in electronic form on the class Canvas site.

REQUIREMENTS
Each student will complete a number of informal writing assignments (e.g. reflections, annotations of various kinds, etc.), three short formal essays (3-4 pp. each), and develop a longer Research Essay (5-7pp.). Because research and writing are central to what we do in English, I have built into the structure of the course time to discuss writing issues in general, engage in peer critique work, and explore digital literacy and research methodology issues. This work is designed to provide you with the tools necessary to be successful not only in this class, but also in other upper-division English courses sure to follow.

This is primarily a discussion course, and I expect you to come to class prepared to discuss the text(s) for that day. To prepare you for these discussions, I may ask each
of you to bring an observation, question, and/or at least one passage from the text we
are working on to class to share during discussion. Daily preparedness and participation is an important component of your final course grade.
You must complete all major writing assignments in order to receive a course grade.

GRADING
The course grade breakdown is as follows:
Informal Writing/In-class wrting: 20%
Formal Essays (3): 30%
Research Essay: 30%
Reading/Participation/Attendance: 20%

INFORMAL WRITING/EXERCISES (20%)
Informal writing refers to frequent exercises spread throughout the semester that enable
you to practice key disciplinary skills (e.g., close reading, reflection, constructing arguments, responding to feedback) in different genres and formats. Informal writing
may occur in class (such as a guided free writing exercise) or at home (such as weekly
journals or responses). Such writing need not be academic in style, and may be creative,
persuasive, or multimodal.

FORMAL WRITING (3 ESSAYS/RESEARCH ESSAY) (60%)
Formal writing refers to the finished products that emerge from a sustained reading/writing/ rereading/revising process. All finished compositions are graded according to a disciple-specific set of criteria for what is widely recognized as a "good"
argument in English. These criteria include clear organization, accurate historical and/or cultural contextualization, fullness and coherence of ideas, appropriate use of
textual evidence, thorough analysis of textual evidence, and proper citation of sources in
the service of persuasive or interpretive arguments that are responsive to class assignments.

This course requires four formal writing assignments. Expect to complete about 4000-
5000 words in formal writing to meet the GWAR requirement. Work in class will directly relate to these assignments. I will pass out essay topics and other handouts to
assist you as you write. All completed formal assignments will be submitted on Canvas,

though you may also be asked to bring paper drafts to class for peer critique work. All formal assignments will be graded on the standard letter scale. This class encourages you to turn in your best writing for each of the formal assignments. You will also get the option to resubmit one of the four short essays if it has been substantively revised for a new grade at the end of the semester.

READING/PARTICIPATION/ATTENDANCE (20%)

Always read the literary works or pages listed on the syllabus before that class begins. Always bring, or have access to, the assigned readings for class. All forms of participation begin with attendance! Active, thoughtful participation in class discussion and in other class work is required of all students. Please be respectful and constructive with your peers. All class members are expected to prepare for class with topics, questions, and passages that the class should consider. “Participation” is not simply another word for “talking.” Voicing a thought, response, or question is an important component of participation, but students can also participate in other ways by listening attentively, by using body language to show interest in others’ contributions, and by coming to class prepared. Although speaking in front of others is not always fun, it is essential for testing ideas and expanding your learning. You can also earn participation credit by completing in-class writing when assigned. Basic participation (grade B) is earned by being alert, attentive, positive, and contributing a constructive question or observation once a week. If you are concerned about your participation grade or are having a hard time contributing in class, come talk to me. While I will sometimes rely on volunteers for discussion, I will also call on people to ensure that a small number of eager students do not dominate the discussion. If you are called on, you are welcome to pass. Constructive class participation is essential to the success of the class.

LATE POLICY

All formal assignments will have a 48-hour “grace period” after the deadline in which you can still turn them in with no grade penalty. If you cannot submit within 48 hours of the deadline you should request an extension. I am open to offering extensions as long as they do not interfere with other course work. I would rather arrange to give you an extension than simply not hear from you and not receive the work that is due. Late papers (those turned in after the deadline without an extension) will be penalized 1/3 letter grade for each calendar day they are late (A becomes A-, C+ becomes C, etc.). All missing work receives a 0. Late work may not receive prompt feedback. All informal writing/exercises need to be completed on time to be useful to you. Late informal assignments will receive only partial credit.

PLAGIARISM
Plagiarism is a form of cheating or fraud; it occurs when a student misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgment, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as his or her own. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given an "F" grade. All instances of plagiarism in the College of Liberal and Creative Arts will be reported to the Dean of the College, and may be reported to the University Judicial Affairs Officer for further action.

SF STATEMENT ON USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI):
Use of artificial intelligence (AI), unless specifically directed by the instructor as part of the assignment, is considered a violation of CSU Student Conduct Code, under Plagiarism/Cheating (1.a-c). A student who is producing any writing they did not create on their own, without their own mind, is the definition of submitting a false document. Faculty should submit all violations of academic integrity to the Office of Student Conduct for follow-up.

BASIC NEEDS ARE YOUR RIGHT
Everyone needs support. There are also resources available to offer you help with your feelings, finances, housing and food.

EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT
• CAPS is a resource on campus that provides counseling and mental Health Services.
Appointments can be made by calling (415) 338-2208 and visit https://psyservs.sfsu.edu/

HOUSING, FOOD and FINANCAL SUPPORT
• For help with food, housing and finance resources please visit https://basicneeds.sfsu.edu including access to emergency housing.
Do you need helping to pay for food? Check out CalFresh, a program that gives you money for groceries. Email calfresh@sfsu.edu to see if you qualify and for more information
Gator Groceries provides food to SFSU students. To sign up visit https://www.gatorgroceries.com

DISABILITY ACCESS
Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor within the first few weeks of the course. The Disability Programs

and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/415-338-2472, video phone/ 415-335-7210) or by email (dprc@sfsu.edu).

STUDENT DISCLOSURES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

SF State fosters a campus free of sexual violence including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as an SF State student, the course instructor is required to notify the Title IX Coordinator by completing the report form available at http://titleix.sfsu.edu, emailing vpsaem@sfsu.edu or calling 338-2032.

To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact:

• · The SAFE Place - (415) 338-2208; http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/
• · Counseling and Psychological Services Center - (415) 338-2208; http://psyservs.sfsu.edu/
• · For more information on your rights and available resources: http://titleix.sfsu.edu

THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA DEFINE GWAR AT SAN FRANCISCO STATE:

Criterion 1 – Class Size: Courses satisfying the GWAR should have an enrollment maximum of 20-25 students. In rare cases, if departmental conditions warrant, and a rationale is provided to justify the exception, CWEP may approve a course that exceeds the maximum.

Criterion 2 – Number of Pages/Words: The overall assignments for the course will include a minimum of 15 pages, meaning the equivalent of 4000 words, of formal writing that demonstrates upper-division written English proficiency within the given discipline.

Criterion 3 – How Writing Will Affect the Final Grade: At least 60% of the grade in GWAR courses must be based on written assignments and take-home essay exams (e.g., exams designed to allow for revision), which are evaluated for both content and quality of writing.

Criterion 4 – Revision of Assignments: GWAR courses must include substantive revision of major, graded, written assignments in response to feedback.

Criterion 5 – Types of Assignments: GWAR courses should include a variety of writing assignments that are sequenced and or distributed throughout the semester, rather than concentrated at the end.

Criterion 6 – In-class Attention to Writing: GWAR course syllabi should reflect

significant class time devoted to instruction in writing conventions within the given discipline.
Criterion 7 – Number of Units: GWAR courses, or course sequences, should be at least 3
units.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES
PLO #1: Differentiate how language use varies across the contexts and genres of professional writing and rhetoric, literature, and linguistics. (Disciplinary Knowledge)
PLO #2: Formulate and pursue methodologically sound lines of inquiry, effectively placing their ideas side by side the ideas of others, drawing persuasively on credible
primary and secondary sources. (Research)
PLO #3: Produce rhetorically effective texts across a range of digital, print, and multimedia formats. (Written Communication/Digital Literacy)
PLO #4: Analyze language and texts in relation to the historical and social contexts in
which they are situated. (Historical Thinking)
PLO #5: Apply critical thinking, close reading, and rhetorical persuasion to engage productively and ethically in scholarly, civic, and professional communities. (Application & Engagement)

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR ENG 480 GWAR
1. Use writing and revision to demonstrate effective close reading across a diverse range of literary, persuasive, or rhetorical texts in English. (Close Reading through Writing) [Associated with PLO #1]
2. Understand textual interpretation as more than reading comprehension, as texts come to be understood within relevant generic, historical, professional, cultural, or global contexts. (Interpretation & Context) [Associated with PLO #4]
3. Use textual evidence effectively to construct arguments, including digital literacy
and developing skills for evaluating, understanding, and employing resources in the service of interpretation or persuasion. (Evidence & Source Use) [Associated with PLOs #2, 3]
4. Analyze, articulate, and apply principles of social justice in addressing social constructions of identity, hierarchy, power, and privilege in rhetorical and literary texts, reflecting on their implications for local and/or global communities today. (Analysis & Social Justice) [Associated with PLO #5]
5. Reflect on their own composing process, placing their work within larger scholarly, professional, or civic conversations. (Metacognition & Audience) [Associated with PLO #5]
6. Demonstrate their understanding of discipline-specific criteria for effective writing by revising their formal writing in response to feedback from peers and instructors. (Revision) [Associated with PLO #3]

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES:
[See the class Canvas site for more details.]

T Aug 25: Introduction/Syllabus

Th Aug 27: Discussion: Why major in English
T Sept 1: Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues”
Th Sept 3: Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues”
T Sept 8: Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues”
Th Sept 10: [In class writing]
T Sept 15: Peer Critique Work
Th Sept 17: Donne, “Elegie…”
T Sept 22: Behn, “To the Fair Clarinda…”
Th Sept 24: Gray, “Sonnet on the Death of Richard West”
T Sept 29: Gorman, “The Hill We Climb”
Th Oct 1: Writer’s Workshop #1
T Oct 6: Peer Critique Work
Th Oct 8: Annotation Research Methods
T Oct 13: Shakespeare, The Tempest
Th Oct 15: Shakespeare, The Tempest
T Oct 20: Shakespeare, The Tempest
Th Oct 22: Shakespeare, The Tempest
T Oct 27: Writer’s Workshop #2
Th Oct 29: Peer Critique Work
T Nov 3: MLA Bibliography Research Tutorial
Th Nov 5: Tempest Criticism
T Nov 10: Satrapi, Persepolis
Th Nov 12: Satrapi, Persepolis
T Nov 17: Writer’s Workshop #3
Th Nov 19: Peer Critique Work
T Nov 24: THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS
Th Nov 26: THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS
T Dec 1: Research Paper Work
Th Dec 3: Research Paper Work
T Dec 8: Research Paper Work
Th Dec 10: Research Paper Work